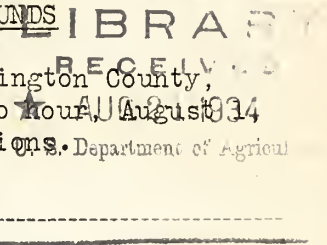


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A radio talk by Mrs. W. H. Harrison, Farm Woman, Washington County, North Carolina, delivered during the home demonstration radio hour, August 1934, and broadcast by a network of associate NBC radio stations.

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Friends, I regard it as a special honor and privilege to represent my own state of North Carolina on the subject of how we farm people have enjoyed our improved home grounds.

My husband and I realized that a comfortable home is satisfying, that it helps to increase family morale, and has a definite, positive influence in shaping the character of the children who are reared in it. Therefore, we wanted to improve all of our surroundings, the outside as well as the inside, and we determined to have as pretty a place as possible with native shrubs and those we could get in our neighborhood plant exchange.

I wish I could make you realize just how much we enjoy the lovely "garden spot" we have made and you would if you had seen a picture of our home before improvements were started. Ours is a simple little cottage nestled in a large grove of trees down in the Old North State, about 150 feet from the road. I assure you it is gratifying to sit on our front porch and see people slow down their automobiles to observe what we have planted.

Until a short time ago the corn crib and the stable stood on the north side of the house extending far out into the front yard; the poultry house was only a few feet from the house; and the lawn was broken by paths and beds of flowers which were dotted all over it. It took the whole family's cooperation to rearrange that yard.

The barns and garage were moved and grouped at the rear. My husband and the boys hitched each building to the Ford. Such excitement at our house! The old Model T had carried us through many muddy roads. It did not fail us in this time of need. It pulled and pulled. More gas! "Shoot the gas, Mama!" The garage moved over so slightly. Then more. Finally it was in its place in the back yard.

Many loads of rubbish were hauled away, and an ugly ditch was filled before we could begin on the plan which we had secured through our Home Demonstration Agent. It was a simple plan suited to the home and its setting; at least our city cousins were not imitated.

We graded a driveway on the town side of the house, with the service road turning to the rear and disappearing behind a high planting of crepe myrtles and native shrubs. We have now a green lawn and the rambling low pitched cottage in its setting of shrubs is the center of interest.

I wish all of you could see the native dogwood, yellow jassamine, crab-apple and woodbine in the spring, against the background of cedars and gallberries.

Many of the shrubs are native to the section, such as sweet myrtle, gallberry, fetter bush and yaupon, and they were planted with syringa, golden ball, spirea, lilac and Japan crab which I had rooted. These plants were grouped along the driveway, by the steps and at the corners of the foundation, and there is seldom a time when one of them is not in bloom.

(Over)

Around the garage and other out-buildings we have a background of poplars with smaller evergreens, flowering shrubs and perennials grouped in front.

In the side yard next to our living room is our outdoor living room where there are comfortable home-made seats under the trees; two hammocks, one made of oat sacks and another of barrel staves; and an old iron cot which is painted and fitted with rain-proof pillows. At one end of the garden is an old-fashioned arbor with honeysuckle and roses climbing over it. There are seats and tables where all of our magazines and papers can be found. It is here that we cut watermelons in the summer and eat scuppernong grapes and other fruit.

On the adjoining yard are tennis and basket ball courts, a croquet set, and home-made playground equipment for the younger children.

In this out-of-door living room we tried to include things which each member of the family might enjoy, and we have a place of rest and comfort to which our friends love to come, and the birds are numbered among our friends.

The planting of our home grounds has been "A labor of love and joy." In years to come we hope our children will come down the pathway of dreams to the garden and seek the perfume of the crab and lilac. We have not tried to excel any one else while improving our home, but we have made a sincere effort to make it a place of permanent beauty.

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